



# REENTRY & EMPLOYMENT IN ST. LOUIS:

A MODEL FOR BUSINESS,  
COMMUNITY, AND WORKERS

CCC  
A public-private partnership promoting an  
effective system of community corrections  
September 2007

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## **A MODEL FOR BUSINESS, COMMUNITY, AND WORKERS**

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# **PART I**

## **EMPLOYMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS: AN ISSUE OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

# EMPLOYMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS: AN ISSUE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

## INTRODUCTION

Securing employment for ex-offenders has a public safety benefit for communities, not just an economic one. For nearly thirty years reentry activities in St. Louis, Missouri have included an array of employment assistance and employer outreach programs, with extensive support for both employer and ex-offender employee.

The St. Louis community has long been known as the “gateway” for offenders to reenter society after prison. More than 17,000 persons have been released from prison across the state each year with a substantial number of these persons returning to St. Louis. An estimated 53% of unemployed parolees are returned to custody within a year. Thirty-two percent of those who work part-time are returned to custody and only 14% of those who work full-time are returned. The strong statistical association of full-time employment with successful reentry is one reason to get offenders employed. This point is not lost on the public as repeated public opinion polls indicate that the public also supports programs that put ex-offenders in the workplace, especially if they pay fines and fees.

Ideally, each community should have an organization that brings community members, businesses and government agencies together to help persons who have been incarcerated find employment. The goal of the St. Louis community has been to leverage various local, state and Federal initiatives to build partnerships to get persons who have criminal records back to work. This report is the result of a one-year project undertaken by the Center for Community Corrections (“Center”) that studied that effort and interviewed individuals involved in this process.

Its purposes were to learn about the work that has been ongoing in St. Louis and to develop a model based on the St. Louis experience that depicts how businesses are engaged with reentry. The Center studied the economic conditions, employer-employee relationship-building and how the criminal justice community has been involved.

To also help develop a functional model, we researched models and experiences in North America. A literature search was conducted to find other offender employment models and examples. This was summarized in a document that serves as a companion resource guide. The elements and components of a model were drawn from observations and examples from St. Louis participants, clients and businesses. The model depicts an approach that has grown over time to include diverse community members and constituencies. In addition, the model has adapted to geographic and cultural variations within St. Louis.

This project was undertaken with the assumption that all the parts of a community can work together on the challenge of meeting business needs while developing a more vibrant workforce through ex-offender employment. There have been various models offered through government and private community corrections agencies but many of these models are not easily replicable. Another problem is that they focus on the criminal justice system and its components without robust community and employer involvement.

We wanted to learn more about the potential for engaging small and large businesses in hiring ex-offenders. This project examined the problems faced by community members and the various points of view that were found in the St. Louis reentry employment arena. We explored the history of Employment Connection, a specialized agency that has long served ex-offenders. We also gained an appreciation for the ongoing reentry collaboration among many businesses and agencies in St. Louis.

## THE CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYING EX-OFFENDERS

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Communities across the country have been increasingly focused on how to retain and attract businesses to find skilled labor in their communities. This is a high priority item for businesses. Community groups from Vermont to Texas have mounted efforts to match a wealth of ex-offenders to fill these jobs. According to Tommy Adkisson, a legislator and attorney, this approach will also help reduce recidivism in his community. “Safety first, then economics should be the main goals in rehabilitating ex-offenders both inside and outside of the prison system.”

### EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

The hiring of ex-offenders is an area where experience builds confidence, and finding ways to build employer confidence is a component of a reentry model.

In an increasingly high-tech business world, getting motivated and qualified employees and managing them is a major challenge. From the business perspective, obstacles to employing ex-offenders can loom large. Safety and security are a concern. A business owner might pose the question, “will an employee who is an ex-offender pose a threat to my staff or business?” This fear is a significant obstacle for most businesses, and doing criminal background checks is one way to find out about potential risks. However, background checks pose problems for both businesses and ex-offenders and should be considered carefully.

When businesses hire ex-offenders, many have made it clear that this is worth the effort. Many business owners who hire ex-offenders have found that the ex-offenders are more loyal and reliable than typical employees.

Another consideration that follows this issue of

safety and security is the public image of a business. Owners might ask, “will customers refuse to frequent my business if I hire ex-offenders?” Yet once employers address this fear, they seem satisfied that it can be managed safely. For example, Rodney Neboka of D & D Furniture, quoted in the Wichita Business Journal said: “I’ve never had any problems where their attitude was bad. I have been happy with the results that we have been getting.” Public perception is one worry but the quality of work is another. Can diligence and initiative be expected of a person with a prison record? And, for drug-related offenders, would relapse be a likely prospect?

This leads to the question of employee stability. According to interviews of employers and recent articles, employers are increasingly hiring individuals who have served time in prison. They may have gained valuable skills and training in prison through education and prison work programs. Moreover, there is a growing confidence in the employment sector summed up by Isaac Dilver of the Citizens Lending Group: “Everyone deserves a second chance and this group of workers has been very good for the company.” So it seems that this is an area where experience builds confidence, and finding ways to build employer confidence is a component of a reentry model.

When employers get information about Federal and state incentives they are also more likely to begin to take on perceived risks. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which can reduce an employer’s income tax liability by as much as \$2,400.00 per worker, is an incentive for employers to hire ex-offenders. Another incentive is known as the Federal Bonding Program. It reduces liability by up to \$5,000.00 for theft, if ex-offenders are hired. There are other tax credits that may help provide additional incentives. They include the Employment Opportunity Tax Credit, and various state tax credits are also available.

From a business perspective, these issues are real barriers to hiring ex-offenders, but most of



them can be addressed by providing accurate information. This study shows how the St. Louis community has addressed such concerns and overcome obstacles to ex-offender employment. It notes common elements found across the country, while focusing on the case study of Employment Connection in St. Louis, Missouri, and the network of agencies and organizations working together to get people suitable jobs.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM STAFF PERSPECTIVE

This project interviewed criminal justice personnel who were overwhelmingly positive about the importance of reentry employment services in St. Louis. For example, probation and parole agencies have done cross-training, developed specialized case management tools, and incorporated employment and an outcome for measuring success upon reentry. Furthermore, criminal justice agencies have worked closely with employment and employers' groups to expand ex-offender employment.

Criminal justice system staff also indicated that over the past several years or more they have made progress in routinely assessing the impediments for individuals to get jobs. They work with prison and jail staff to help get some of the barriers removed while offenders are in jail or about to be released. For example, a driver's license renewal or a valid identification is needed to apply for most jobs. Mentors and community groups help provide the needed support.

Securing employment as an outcome of successful reentry has given criminal justice agencies an opportunity to focus on motivating individuals on parole. Concentration on positive outcomes and rewards for obtaining and staying with a job can be important management tools. Such tools provide needed feedback. Paid work provides the income to pay court fees or fines and to get out of debt.

### CAREER SPECIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Employment Connection and similar organizations and agencies that help former offenders also have valuable perspectives about overcoming obstacles related to their work placement. The first hurdle is to communicate to communities why hiring ex-offenders is a good business practice. Information is collected and presented to employers who do not realize the benefits. For example, they learn that many ex-offenders have valuable work or educational assets that they bring from their prior lives. They may have attained additional education or skills while in prison. Some prisons have training in computers, construction, food services, and other industries. When specific information about the skills and availability of employable ex-offenders is available, this opens many doors.

A second challenge for Career Specialists is to make information available about a variety of incentives that make it worthwhile for employers to hire ex-offenders. These include the federal tax and state incentives listed above as well as various economic partnerships and job training and educational programs that may help train prospective employees.

Working to train clients, place them in jobs and oversee their progress should be a well coordinated task. Although collaboration between agencies and organizations is a great challenge, the positive results far surpass what could be achieved without mutual assistance. This requires that staff be educated about the goals and functions of other agencies and those of the business community. It also suggests that trends learned from experts in the justice and treatment fields (advisors, providers, halfway houses, and others) be shared with other agencies that can benefit from their valuable experience. Communication with the justice system is essential as well, as it is important for parole officers to fully understand employability standards. And finally, successful collaboration means that privacy law issues should be addressed in order to facilitate

communication and reduce paperwork.

Also, such interagency collaboration would help better address client needs that are peripheral to employment but essential to the person. Such needs include housing and childcare, which, if unaddressed, are obstacles to employment and reentry.

Among other challenges facing Career Specialists in non-profit organizations is the cost of training and supervision. One suggestion is to provide more tax incentives for organizations to invest in offender employment. On another front, community fears and public resistance to locating programs of an agency dealing with former offender populations make it difficult to start programs. A “not in my back yard” (NIMBY) attitude can prevail, obstructing integration back into the community. One of the features of the Employment Connection that combats NIMBY to some extent is that it provides a range of services to individuals who are not offenders as well.

## EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

Former offenders trying to get back into the work force face a series of complicated challenges as discussed by Maria Beck. The first concern is whether they are ready and prepared to go to work. This involves motivational, educational and achievement barriers. For example, a high school diploma attained while in jail helps overcome barriers to some jobs. Dealing with substance abuse and mental health challenges is another need that can be addressed during incarceration, but services and support must be provided once an offender is released or relapse occurs.

The aforementioned privacy law issues often necessitate that ex-offenders answer the same questions repeatedly. Further, work-specific problems include a series of jobs that are closed to them by virtue of them being ex-offenders. Some examples specific to the St. Louis area are jobs where licenses are required (such as a

barber or massage therapist), positions in places that sell alcohol or where money is handled, and any health care position linked to Medicare or Medicaid funding. Another frustration for a client is unrealistic referrals, such as being referred to jobs that are geographically inaccessible or too far away, or not matching the person’s qualifications to the job description. Not receiving payment for job training is a difficulty as well. There may be no choice for the client deciding between taking a less paying job or undergoing training for a better one if there is no compensation for the training period.

As an aftermath of September 11, 2001, it has been harder for offenders to find jobs. Homeland Security screening has changed many of the requirements to work, making it harder to find a secure job. This is particularly true in the area of transportation. There is a gauntlet of checks that the clients have to undergo – drug testing, credit checks, police records checks, etc., that are now required for more and more jobs.

## CONSIDERING A MODEL BASED ON EXISTING REENTRY INITIATIVES

This project searched for descriptions of reentry employment programs across the United States. A list of program research and descriptions was developed as part of this project. It is entitled: “Reentry Employment Initiatives Across North America.” One part of this project outlined here is depicted in the attached St. Louis functional model flowchart. This is a brief functional model intended to outline the elements common to existing models. The other model attached highlights the Employment Connection.

## COMPONENT 1: PRE-RELEASE TARGETING

Correctional industries programs have long provided a foundation for getting offenders to focus on work skills while in prison. Working to help offenders reintegrate back into society

does not start when they get out, but rather before they leave prison. Correctional Industries, for example, are used as work programs within the facilities so that prisoners start to gain real-world experience. Many different programs actually try to establish employment resource centers within jails so that the inmates can learn what is available to them. A few organizations send specialists to work with the inmates to plan what they want to do upon release and also to help them to start learning how to most effectively transition back to society. Talking to the clients even before they are out of jail can lessen the shock of having to immediately find work and housing.

Project Re-Connect in St. Louis sends representatives to speak with inmates and create a plan for how they wish to transition back to society. Many times this includes a referral to Employment Connection. Prerelease targeting can be standardized by using questions and assessment tools. It is fairly low-cost and can be done by a variety of trained individuals from jail staff to employment agency personnel. The important features are developing measurable objectives and outcomes, and communicating the assessment to an identified organization when the individual is released from custody.

## COMPONENT 2: AN IDENTIFIED ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION

The Missouri Department of Corrections implemented “Project Connect” in 2003 as part of an initiative funded by the federal government to improve the outcomes of former prisoners. Project Connect built upon the existing cooperative network in St. Louis in order to help individuals develop specific strategies for gaining employment after release. Among the steps that were taken were:

- to develop individual reentry plans while individuals are incarcerated;
- to identify resources in the community; and
- to connect them with mentors and services

for ongoing support during their reentry. Preliminary information about this effort spearheaded by criminal justice staff is posted on the Missouri website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/sar/mo.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/sar/mo.html).

Many of the Project Connect community groups have worked closely with community non-profit and faith-based members. The models that involve community partnerships include such groups as Volunteers of America, Catholic Charities, Goodwill Industries, TASC programs and a variety of other charities and faith-based groups that provide support, services and mentoring. Not only is this the case in Texas, Oregon, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Chicago but it has been occurring for a very long time in the City of St. Louis.

## COMPONENT 3: QUALIFIED STAFF, COUNSELORS AND CASE MANAGERS

Qualified staff, counselors and case managers are essential in every model we reviewed. While a fully qualified staff may be hard to find, different organizations actually offer necessary training sessions for their counselors. Successful organizations often offer ongoing education to ensure that the counselors more effectively provide services to former offenders. Bonuses are also available to counselors if they have success.

St. Louis has developed a method for case managers and counselors to communicate well and treat the client with respect. This includes granting them a level of responsibility. St. Louis team members apply motivational principles to change behavior by keeping an open mind and listening to client interests -- that is, what they want to accomplish and what they need.

## COMPONENT 4: PROGRAMS THAT ORIENT, MOTIVATE AND CHANGE THE CLIENT

Self-motivation may require a dramatic change in attitude and outlook on life. Different organizations approach this goal in different ways. Ideally, they want to make the clients feel capable of pulling themselves back together and moving on with their lives. Through supervision, substance abuse counseling, and different support programs, the clients can clean up their acts and slowly move towards living healthier lives. This model promotes individual responsibility but is watchful for signs of substance abuse or mental health relapse in some cases. Methods and interactions help clients to achieve, to learn and to get past the stigma that suggests that they cannot succeed.

In terms of what makes treatment successful the model incorporates certain factors:

- hope and expectancy
- the relationship between the client and the counselor
- the client's individual factors
- the model and technique

To accommodate these factors, the model relied on the relationship between the counselor and client.

## COMPONENT 5: PREPARING FOR WORK

How to apply effectively for jobs is a basic component to finding work. The St. Louis model helps ex-offenders compile a resume, educational certificates, and other documents in one place, such as an employment folder. Classes providing interviewing skills or resume writing skills are offered by Employment Connection and other partners in the region.

Orientation programs inform the clients as to what choices they have and how they can be helped. Then the clients can take on-site classes. Classes are taught by staff who are cultur-

ally diverse and include ex-offenders. There are also links and referrals to offender peer support groups and networks.

Some employment models around the country provide jobs or form work crews for ex-offenders. This enables them to gain experience and have short-term employment until they find more permanent jobs. Former offenders may spend some time in the week working with the work crew, and then spend another day interviewing for more permanent work or meeting with their work specialist.

Other groups provide vocational educational classes/training for the ex-offenders. Some places have up to 250 programs to choose from – all so that the clients can find what it is they want to do and are competent to do in order to gain the skills to succeed. Assessment is highly important so that the individual finds a job that is a good fit.

An essential element of the reentry model is that individuals must overcome mental health or chemical dependency issues in order to be employable. This is a prerequisite. The St. Louis model screens for substance abuse through drug testing and referral to treatment.

## COMPONENT 6: CONNECTING RESOURCES

A replicable model for reentry employment is one that provides a variety of problem-solving resources to clients and communities. The St. Louis experience has a website that is helpful and contains a variety of publications about how to get help and resources. Moreover, the effort has been made to drop boundaries and get coverage. For example, programs, handbooks, and videos are available to ex-offenders so they can learn about their current situation and available resources.

## COMPONENT 7: COMPLETING THE JOB SEARCH

To find a job, ex-offenders use many of the different hubs of information that the programs provide. They can find employers through mock and real job fairs, or career exploration seminars. Many times the counselor with whom they are working will help them find a job best suited to them. The counselor helps the ex-offender interview well, get the job, and even maintain the job. In many cases the counselor is ready on a moment's notice to help the client if a crisis should arise. Initially the counselor will be very involved, in order for the ex-offender to be considered for a job.

## COMPONENT 8: BUILDING THE EMPLOYER/EMPLOYMENT SEEKER RELATIONSHIP

In order to strengthen the employer/employment seeker relationship the organizations have to show that they and the people that they recommend are trustworthy. As well, the employment seeker has to discover what it is that the employer is looking for, in order to fulfill those requirements adequately. The St. Louis Model includes employers as advisors. Networking with the Chamber of Commerce and business community is a part of the work that is accomplished. Special services are sometimes offered such as those that help employers analyze how to hire people so that they are not being discriminatory against qualified ex-offenders. Also, once an ex-offender is hired, many organizations will follow up not only with the client to make sure that he/she is attending work, but they will also follow up with the employer to make sure the employer is satisfied with the ex-offender's performance. This helps strengthen the relationship between employment seeker and employer.

## COMPONENT 9: ENHANCING EMPLOYER BENEFITS

There are many benefits that employers gain from hiring ex-offenders. They can receive Work

Opportunity Tax Credit, access to the Federal Bonding Program, and certain tax breaks. However, the most important benefit that can be offered, according to an interview with an employer in St. Louis, is that of security or the backing of an organization such as Employment Connection.

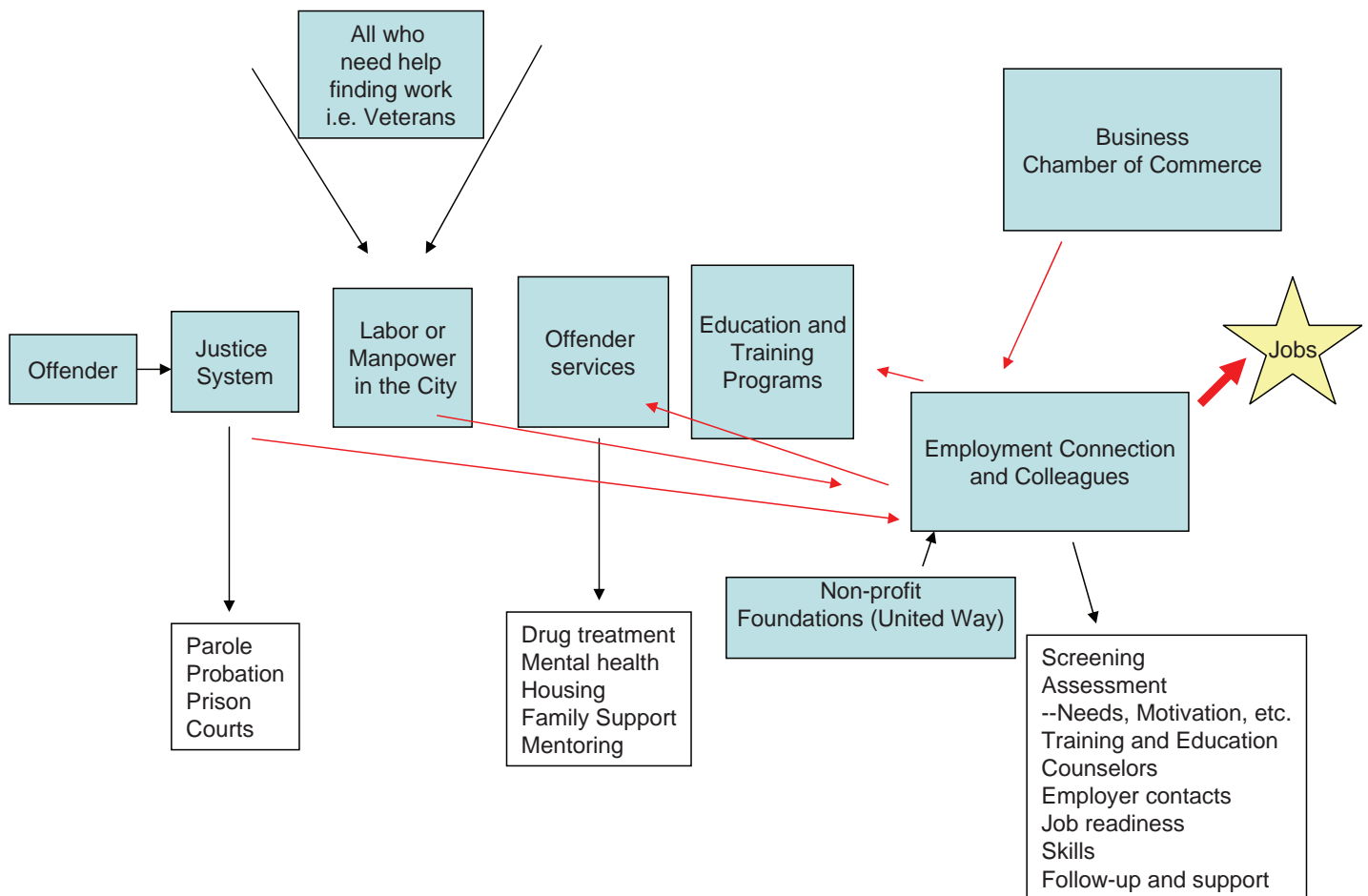
## COMPONENT 10: REVISITING EMPLOYMENT ISSUES AND FOLLOW UP

Many counselors check up on the clients for some time after placement to make sure that they are going to work, both to support them and to provide reassurance to the employers. Many times, even at this stage, clients still need minor supervision. In programs such as the Missouri Department of Corrections Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative offenders can still use program resources after they "graduate." If they ever need to come back due to a job loss or job change they are welcome.

## COMPONENT 11: GOVERNMENT/LEGISLATION CHANGE AND COMMUNITY OPINION CHANGE

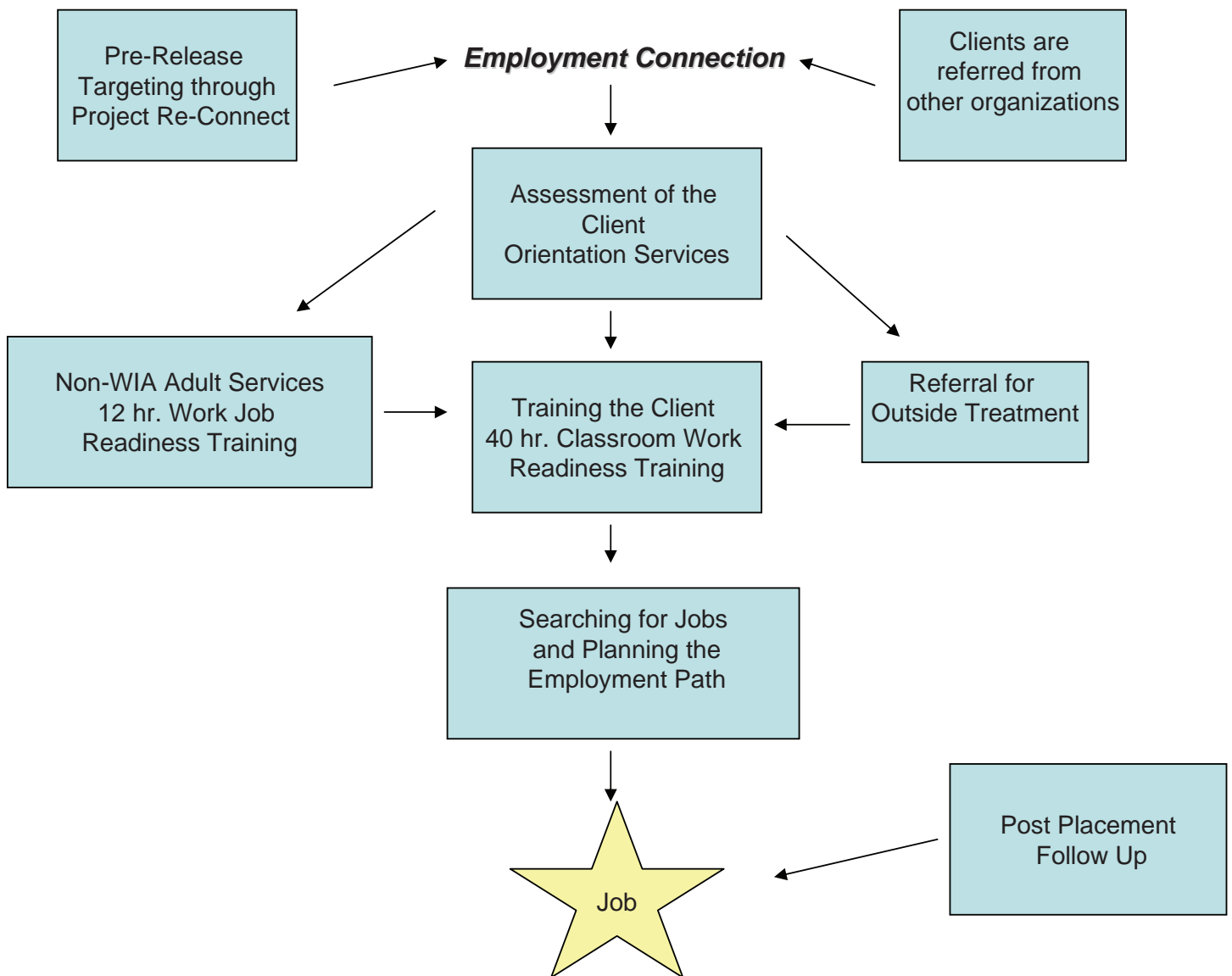
Organizations with this type of experience advocate for policy change to increase the success rates for their clients. Working together with governmental agencies and state and local community programs helps increase the chances for success. Another way of increasing success rates is to have the state raise performance goals for state funded programs. In Missouri a statewide reentry effort has helped raise the level of performance locally. With respect to informing the public, Project Re-Connect is providing documentation of success. Local elected officials have been involved. They do Public Service Announcements so the public can learn that: (1) ex-offenders can be a useful and productive part of society; and (2) there are people who are looking for work.

## St. Louis Functional Model Flowchart





## Client Centered Approach Flowchart



## **PART II**

### **EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION: AN EXAMPLE OF REENTRY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**



# Employment Connection: An Example of Reentry Employment Services

## INTRODUCTION

Ideally, each community should have an organization that brings community members, businesses and government agencies together to help persons who have been incarcerated find employment. The St. Louis community has long been known as the “gateway” for offenders to reenter society after prison. More than 17,000 persons have been released from prison across the state each year with a substantial number of these persons returning to St. Louis. An estimated 53% of unemployed parolees are returned to custody within a year. Thirty-two percent of those who work part-time are returned to custody and only 14% of those who work full-time are returned. The strong statistical association of full-time employment with successful reentry is one reason to get offenders employed. This point is not lost on the public as repeated public opinion polls indicate that the public also supports programs that put ex-offenders in the workplace, especially if they pay fines and fees. This piece explores one example or model in the St. Louis region. Organizations such as Employment Connection exist in several places to change the environment, experiences and lives of persons who step outside their jail cells and reassemble their lives in the community. This case study is part of an ongoing effort by the Center for Community Corrections (“Center”) to document the value of collaborative approaches to helping ex-offenders and their neighborhoods. It is intended to highlight the thirty-year history of a reentry employment model and to illustrate how a well-organized effort with strong ties to business and community networks can be successful.

This piece is written with the assumption that securing meaningful employment for ex-offenders has a public safety benefit as well as an economic one for communities. This piece is also written to highlight development of a region-wide reentry model in the St. Louis area. The Employment Connection case study is a companion to an overview that highlights components of a reentry network in St. Louis. It highlights the gradual development of public private partnerships over a 30-year history. Leadership emerged early to advocate for programs that would address chronic unemployment and the need for workforce development to keep pace with economic growth in the region. We underscore the components and activities of this effort as well as the experiences of clients and staff. A key component is the commitment and connectivity of Employment Connection as it serves the needs of area businesses. In reviewing our discussion of a model we probe how the many community, philanthropic, and governmental agency connections have helped educate the field as to the importance of this effort.

## AGENCY HISTORY

Employment Connection was incorporated in 1977 under the name St. Louis Opportunity Clearinghouse as a non-profit agency funded by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE). The inception of the program followed a 1975 study by the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis Young Lawyers (BAMSL) that linked high ex-offender recidivism rates to unemployment. In 1980 the St. Louis Opportunity Clearinghouse was awarded full member agency status by the United Way of Greater St. Louis, having received funding and conditional membership just one year earlier. From 1984 to 1998 home-based employment services were given to disabled individuals through the Homebound Employment Program (HEP). A Neighborhood Justice Program was

piloted from 1986-1989 to help crime victims. From 1994 to 1996 the City Youth on the Move (CYM) technology-based program was piloted for high school drop outs ages 18-21. In 1995 the organization name was changed to Employment Connection.

While the many projects and stages in the development of Employment Connection will not all be included here, a few will be mentioned. In 1997 Work Adjustment Counseling (WAC) was piloted with United Way, and in 1997 the Welfare-to-Work program was implemented. Together with ARCHS (Area Resources for Community and Human Services), neighborhood-based employment services were piloted through a satellite office. A WIA (Workforce Investment Act) contract with SLATE funded the implementation of Youth Educational Upgrading and Job Placement in 2001 for out-of-school youth ages 19-24, with the Sylvan Learning Center. 2001 also saw Employment Connection partnering with DART (Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation and Treatment) and the City of St. Louis Mental Health Board to realize CARE (Connection for Aftercare, Recovery, and Employment). The Managed Work Services program was started in 2002 marking the start of a number of different programs to help find jobs for clients including Career Assistance Program, Veteran's Services Case Management, and others. Ever since, the agency has been growing and expanding, most recently establishing Project Re-Connect to help the reentry process for prisoners before and upon release.

Program expansion has been supported by vigorous economic development due to private and public funding and investments. In 1983 a building was purchased for its programs and to provide revenue, and the building debt was retired two years later. The agency developed a Five-year Long Range Plan in 1985. In 1989, a Board Investment Policy was implemented with \$50,000.00 in initial investments toward a \$500,000.00 investment and reserve goal. In

1999 a Perpetual Long Range Plan was developed and implemented, and in 2000 investment reserves exceeded \$1,000,000.00. St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) provided funding at the beginning of the pilot project, and it is important to emphasize that SLATE, along with United Way of Greater St. Louis, has continually funded Employment Connection and allowed it to refine services for ex-offenders and others over the past 30 years.

## PRIMARY GOALS

From the beginning, the goal has been “to assist persons with limited opportunities to self-sufficiency through employment.” By helping these persons, they in turn help the community by increasing the standard of life and by decreasing the crime rate and problems that ride on the tails of unemployment. Ex-offenders who find employment are 66% less likely to offend again. Also, taxpayers would save \$14,000 for each person who isn't incarcerated.

## PROGRAM RESULTS

The program, reaching its 30-year anniversary this year, has been very successful. In 2006 alone 1,859 people found work through Employment Connection. Sixty-five percent of those people were ex-offenders or people with substance abuse problems.

## KEY COMPONENTS

### *Employment Connection Community Partnerships*

Employment Connection partners with government services, private foundations and businesses. The number of community-based organizations in a network that refers individuals to Employment Connection is in the double digits, and local employers collaborating with Employment Connection are in the triple digits.

Employment Connection works with surrounding agencies to increase their chances of success.

As mentioned, they are a full-member agency of the United Way of Greater Missouri, they partner with St. Louis Public Schools, and work with 32 community-based organizations who refer people to Employment Connection. These organizations include the following: Center for Life's Solutions, Missouri Board of Probation and Parole, Federal Probation and Parole, St. Louis Office of Veterans Affairs, Dismas House, Salvation Army/Harbor House, St. Louis Community Release Center, United Way of Greater St. Louis, Immanuel Lutheran Church Prisoner Services, and Fathers Support Center. The WIA Adult Partners they work with include St. Louis Community College Culinary Arts Department, Grace Hill, Educational Outreach Center for St. Louis Community College, Veterans Administrations, and MERSGoodWill for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Employment Connection partners with many organizations that offer multiple services to which people can be referred. These services include substance abuse counseling, housing/shelter, mental health counseling, child support enforcement, utility assistance, orders of protection, healthcare, clothing, credit counseling, educational services, food, and faith-based services.

#### *Employment Connection Staff, Counselors and Case Managers*

One of the most important parts of a successful model is the cooperation and ability of the staff. Employment Connection finds highly trained and experienced people to work with clients. All are committed to the work and believe that by helping ex-offenders they can in fact make a difference and help reduce the rates of recidivism. Some of the staff is convinced by their own personal experiences. Brenda Mahr, Chief Executive Officer, states: "Since our inception we've trained and employed former offenders as Career Specialists; partnered with degreed and/or experienced workforce development staff; they are an awesome team and another key to

our success. The team empowers and motivates those we serve to take charge of their lives and become tax payers instead of tax users. And they persuade employers to give others a Second Chance. As we move into the future, we envision Employment Connection not as a place to just get a job, but as a place to build a career." The staff is supported by 15 volunteer directors who represent a number of different business fields. This volunteer board helps provide insight into what businesses need so that clients can be the ideal providers.

The 45-member Advisory Council helps Employment Connection stay on top of the newest trends. They make sure that all populations are being served. The Chief Operating Officer oversees the day-to-day activities. Many of the administrative staff work directly with the staff executing the services which streamlines the efficiency and makes it easier to regulate and oversee the services. Regular meetings of the supervisors also help Employment Connection stay focused and running at top efficiency.

## **CLIENT CENTERED APPROACH**

### *Pre-Release Targeting*

A partner that works with Employment Connection is Project Re-Connect. This group targets offenders about two months before they are released and helps the clients make an Individual Support Plan so that upon their immediate release they can make use of the employment services available and have a smoother re-entry into society. For Project Re-Connect the "purpose is to provide a one-on-one caring and compassionate relationship that helps [the clients] stay grounded and focused on [their] goals."

### *Listening to the Person*

Instead of just providing a temporary solution – finding a job – Employment Connection works with the clients to help them become better people. By motivating, educating, and believing

in the clients, Employment Connection helps the clients keep jobs and stay productive in the future. And if there is a bump in the road or if a job is lost, they still have the motivation to try again. The goal to initiate substantial change at more fundamental levels of the person decreases the likelihood that clients will revert to their old ways.

### *Assessing the Clients*

When clients are referred to the program they must go through a screening process to see if they will be eligible for all of the programs available. During a half-day orientation program, they take certain tests and fill out forms to see if they qualify. At this time they take a Test of Adult Basic Education which shows their current math and reading skills. Those that are not ready for change or are not willing to change are referred to other treatment centers to recover or other employment services. Some are still given a twelve-hour World of Work Job Readiness Training program. By doing this, Employment Connection does not ever turn anyone completely away, but always tries to set them on the right path.

The screening process allows Employment Connection to focus on those who are really trying to improve their lives and change themselves for the better. Those who come to Employment Connection cleaned up, ready to learn, and willing to change their attitude, are the clients that are typically accepted into the programs, which begin with a forty-hour classroom Work Readiness Training. Those who do not meet the requirements are enrolled in the non-WIA Adult services. These clients attend the twelve-hour work readiness seminar, but they do not move on to the more extensive programs because they have demonstrated that they are not able or willing to improve themselves.

A combination of assessment tools, including Holland Codes Assessment Tests, contribute to client understanding of their own interests and

capacities, and increase the likelihood that the job they pursue will be a good fit.

### *Training the Clients*

The two-day World of Work program has three primary objectives. First, that the clients become competent with the interview procedures of completing a job application well and creating a positive impression during the interview. The second goal is that the clients identify personal skills and interests related to different jobs, and that they know how to use those skills to meet employer expectations. The third objective is the establishment of work force relations. This means that the clients learn how to make a good first impression and continue to meet employer expectations in order to continue in the job.

Considering that people cannot be held responsible for what they do not know, this program is thorough and extensive in laying out characteristics necessary to meet business needs in Missouri, on the one hand, and attitudes and behaviors that will lead to employment success, on the other. In this intensive training, clients are taught how to present themselves positively to employers without being dishonest about their past. Even when someone has a prison record, there is undoubtedly some work experience and skills achieved that can be honestly and convincingly presented in a positive light, if only the clients know how.

Building upon the World of Work program, in the forty-hour comprehensive training, clients develop even more extensively employment acquisition skills and those necessary to satisfy employer expectations in order to ensure job stability. Literally, the overall objective is, "to prepare participants for the challenges associated with securing, maintaining employment, and advancing to self-sufficient wages through the use of hands-on activities and classroom instruction." The Work Readiness Training that they receive includes more than 30 topics instilling the importance of work habits, team skills, wise time

management, and the ability to acquire and use information, which are the top characteristics sought by employers.

The three stages of this program: (1) understanding yourself; (2) getting involved; and (3) understanding the workplace, balance both theory and practice. They allow time and space for self-assessment and reflection as well as learning to manage all of the paperwork related to a job search. Questions such as “Does Work Pay?” are asked and answered, as are topics such as “More Education-Higher Earnings” and the importance of networking. The program is realistic about the challenges of getting into and staying in the work force. It gives clients the tools that they need to be more prepared to face these obstacles.

During the training, clients undergo a vigorous mock interview process where they can learn from their own mistakes, often seeing themselves on video, and receive valuable feedback from others. At the end of the program, WIA eligible persons are entered into the Missouri Works Toolbox System which enables careful documentation of their progress and facilitates information sharing aimed at each participant receiving the needed services.

### *Searching for Jobs*

Participants finish the program with their own resume and a personal guide for filling out applications. Ongoing job development and placement services are also available, including eight on-site interview days a year as well as job fairs. The interviews and the fairs make it easier for employers to hire clients and easier for clients to find work. Employment Connection prides itself on a rapid attachment model, aiming to place program participants within 40 days. Case management and job retention services are provided for up to a year, which involves contact two times a month. There is a built-in program evaluation and program goal completion assessment as well.

All of these employment acquisition and retention services give employers the security that someone is going to be following up on the ex-offenders that they have hired, while also putting positive pressure on the ex-offenders to continue working efficiently.

### *Planning the Employment Path*

To produce this kind of change Employment Connection’s Career Specialists work individually with the clients and listen to their needs. Together they develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to make realistic goals, identify means and a time frame, and talk about barriers to employment. One of the most important things that is addressed in the Work Readiness Training is actually how to change their attitudes not only to be more optimistic, but also to be more confident in themselves.

### *Post-Placement Follow Up*

If a client loses a job or is looking to switch jobs he/she is always welcome back to Employment Connection. The agency does not give up on him/her once he/she walks out the door, which inspires a great deal of confidence and hope in clients. The clients know they have the tools to become more independent, but they will not be left alone along the way. Many of the clients are starting over again. They will take those first steps and become more secure. They will eventually go farther, but not without someone at Employment Connection to whom they can go back for stability, or someone who can help pick them up again if they fall.

### *Addressing the Needs of Diverse Clients*

One unique factor at Employment Connection, and a strength of the organization, is that for over 30 years, services have been extended beyond recovering substance abusers to others such as homeless persons, domestic violence victims,



and high school dropouts. Employment Connection also works to meet employment needs of veterans and handicapped persons.

## EMPLOYER SERVICES

Employment Connection works with over 400 area employers annually. Career Specialists talk with the employers and build lasting and trusting relationships. The agency demonstrates that ex-offenders are just like any other workers that the employers already have, capable of good work and diligence, but also likely to have some weaknesses. Personnel issues are inevitable, so the question then is, why not hire people who are backed by Employment Connection. This eases not only the hassles of the hiring process, but also ongoing human resources problems and liability issues. In fact, Employment Connection supports and backs up their clients for a predetermined amount of time set forward in a contract up to twelve months. Any problems the clients have, ranging from transportation or child care, will be taken care of by Employment Connection.

### *Managed Work Services*

One Employment Connection program that effectively encourages employers to hire clients is Managed Work Services. This service functions as a temporary agency and works with employers to staff and manage some of their entry-level positions, and provides on-the-job training. The main goal is to provide clients with job experience and opportunities while also satisfying employer requirements. Through this program ex-offenders can prove that they are capable of decent and reliable work, and Employment Connection stands with them, supporting them, and overcoming obstacles. After an employer establishes a contract with Managed Work Services, the costs of employing the clients are covered, and the experience is essentially an on-site extended interview where Employment Connection

provides staffing and supervisory services.

### *On-Site Interviews*

With respect to on-site interviews, employers can sign up to see applicants at Employment Connection offices. By coming to the office and seeing many people at once, they drastically reduce the amount of time interviewing. There is no fee for this service, though employers must register to come.

### *Competitive Employment Unit and CAP Unit: Prescreening*

If employers are still looking for other workers, they can use the Competitive Employment Unit and CAP unit. These two programs pre-screen applicants and provide employers with people they feel would fill the job effectively. They also provide the employers with backgrounds of the employees such as social and emotional factors. Employers offer the ideal profile, and this is matched as best as possible to a person.

Not only does Employment Connection pre-screen applicants for employers, but they also screen employers for their clients. For example, during a routine meeting between a woman and her career counselor at the agency, the counselor presented the woman with three available jobs for which she would have been suited. The woman expressed interest in one of the places of business, the counselor called and set up an interview, and the woman went straight to the interview with directions on how to get there and money for transportation in hand.

## CASE STUDIES

### *Employer Interview*

An employer at an auto repair shop in Missouri speaks favorably about working with Employment Connection since 2001. He appreciates when Employment Connection not only steers a mechanic to his business, but also continues

with follow-up, including site visits. What matters to him is that the individuals are good mechanics, and Employment Connection only sends him qualified people. His personal philosophy mirrors the collective philosophy at Employment Connection which is that people deserve a chance. If a mechanic who is an ex-offender starts working at PJ Auto Repair, that person's past history is kept private, as he sees no reason for that person to start working with a stigma attached to him. The mechanic is judged on his level of performance and motivation. After mechanical skills, the employer rates a high motivation level as a critical factor in a mechanic successfully working with others on the job and receiving training. Emanuel echoes an underlying Employment Connection principle -- increasing an individual's personal motivation and belief in self is integral to perseverance on the job and in life.

#### *Employment Connection Client Interviews*

The following are examples of stories from persons who were clients of Employment Connection: John was 54 when he was referred by his probation officer. John has been employed in a restaurant but had a history of problems with anger management on the job. He had spent time in jail and in hospital mental health units over the years, but was hard working and had been able to rebound and get work. John came to Employment Connection for assistance in finding a new job and also to get job skills needed to advance his career. He was working at just above minimum wage with no health benefits. He had participated in the seven-day class and found it to be helpful. John was working with substance abuse and mental health support counselors in the community to overcome his long history with these issues. John believed that his counselor and classes at Employment Connection had been helpful in encouraging him with his job search. The classes helped him approach his present job with a better attitude

and to understand his employer's side of the story. He was looking forward to participating in future educational programs and interviews. Employment Connection helped him feel that he could look carefully at his options while still meeting his present obligations. John was still in training but felt already that his prospects had improved.

William was referred to Employment Connection by the local unemployment office. He had been unemployed and had a felony record, and the Department of Labor informed him that Employment Connection would be helpful to his reentry effort. He took the seven-day orientation class and met with an Employment Connection Career Specialist. He found that videotaped mock job interviews helped him interview better than before. The critique of each interview and seeing his own reactions helped him understand how to present the best case for himself as a potential employee. William also took a General Equivalency Degree class offered by Employment Connection. This class helped him get his GED. He applied for a job at a metal fabricating company and got it. He has received three pay incentive increases on the job since being there and is happy with his employment and its benefits.

Charles learned of Employment Connection through a peer recovery support group. Charles is living in a transitional housing facility in St. Louis and was previously homeless. After Charles began his recovery from substance abuse and alcohol use he contacted Employment Connection and set up an appointment. Charles believes that Employment Connection's work is important because: "Everybody deserves a second chance but it is hard to convince an employer that a person should be employed after they have a run-in with the law." Charles noted that while some employers get a tax break for hiring ex-offenders, this is not a sufficient incentive for them. He noted that working with a group that supports ex-offenders like Employment Connection means a lot to the employers because

they know that they will have backing. Charles found a job with a firm with less than 100 employees through Employment Connection. He has been making plans to save his earnings and move out of the transitional house where he presently resides.

## CONCLUSION

Employment Connection's success story could not have been possible without community collaboration and sharing of resources across many agencies in St. Louis. Although there are many agencies in St. Louis that serve individuals with criminal records, an additional problem that Employment Connection has specialized in is manpower development. As experts in the employment field, Employment Connection's

advisors and staff have helped change the programs over the years to meet the community needs. Employment Connection has been able to withstand the changes in federal, state, and local agency funding and assistance in part because it serves as a contributor to the success of local businesses. The program offers low-cost but demanding curricula for its graduates. At the same time it helps them find other needed support services and become motivated to find work and keep it. This positive motivational approach is crafted to meet individual client characteristics. This individual attention is the glue that keeps client and business relationships strong. It also helps educate staff in other agencies about the potential for successfully getting individuals back to work.

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<sup>i</sup>See National Center for State Courts, Sentencing Attitudes Survey, July 2006.

<sup>ii</sup>[www.employmentstl.org](http://www.employmentstl.org).

<sup>iii</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>iv</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>v</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup>Employment Connection, Executive Summary, 2006.

<sup>vii</sup>Quote provided by David Kessel, Chief Operating Officer of Employment Connection, August 17, 2007.

<sup>viii</sup>Employment Connection, Executive Summary, 2006.

<sup>ix</sup>Project Re-Connect leaflet.

<sup>x</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>xi</sup>Telephone interview with Uma Murugan and Scott Utry of Employment Connection by Lillian Henricks, Thursday, August 2, 2007.

<sup>xii</sup>Employment Connection World of Work (WOW) Job Readiness Training workbook.

<sup>xiii</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>xiv</sup>Employment Connection Work Readiness Training Workbook.

<sup>xv</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>xvi</sup>[www.employmentstl.org](http://www.employmentstl.org).

<sup>xvii</sup>Explained by Scott Utry in telephone interview with Uma Murugan and Scott Utry of Employment Connection by Lillian Henricks, Thursday, August 2, 2007.

<sup>xviii</sup>See online article for more information about Managed Work Services: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/local/mo/stlouis.cfm>.

<sup>xix</sup>Telephone interview with employer by Lillian Henricks, Wednesday, August 1, 2007. Name has been omitted for anonymity.

<sup>xx</sup>Names have been changed for anonymity.





# **PART III**

## **Reentry Employment Initiatives Across North America**

## Reentry Employment Initiatives Across North America

State/National	Organization/Document Type	Salient Points
National	<i>National Correctional Industries Association</i> <a href="http://www.nationalcia.org/">http://www.nationalcia.org/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to provide real-world experience to inmates, Correctional Industries are used as work programs within facilities.</li> <li>Correctional Industries are the only self-funded reentry support programs. They use funds gathered by the sale of products and services made through the program.</li> </ul>
International Session, Information	<p><i>14<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Criminology</i> <i>Campbell Collaboration Reviews: Boot Camps, Employment of Ex-Offenders and Restorative Justice</i></p> <p>Article 1: <a href="http://www.springerlink.com/content/r86832p63050t11j/">http://www.springerlink.com/content/r86832p63050t11j/</a></p> <p>Article 2: <a href="http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/32/1/3">http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/32/1/3</a></p> <p>Article on the actual conference: <a href="http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/article.php?id=824">http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/article.php?id=824</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Research in Review</u> article summaries, Volume 8, Number 3, November 2005</li> <li>1. Christy Visser, Laura Winterfield, and Mark Coggeshall. 2005. "Ex-Offender Employment Programs and Recidivism: A Meta-Analysis." <i>Journal of Experimental Criminology</i>, 1 (3), 295-315. Studies show that there is no significant impact on re-offending by community-based employment programs.</li> <li>2. Guy Bourgon and Barbara Armstrong. 2005. "Transforming the Principles of Effective Treatment Into a 'Real World' Setting." <i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i>, 32 (1), 3-25. There is research in support of the idea that prison/community-based treatment programs do reduce re-offending. Programs can reduce rates by 30 percentage points or more.</li> </ul>
National	National H.I.R.E. Network Mission Statement <a href="http://www.hirenetwork.org/who.html">http://www.hirenetwork.org/who.html</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H.I.R.E is a national hub of information regarding "Helping Individuals with criminal records Re-enter through Employment".</li> <li>It intends to improve and increase job options for ex-offenders.</li> <li>This network advocates change in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public policy</li> <li>Employment practices</li> <li>Public opinion</li> </ul> </li> <li>By means of training and technical assistance H.I.R.E teaches other agencies that wish to improve employment prospects</li> </ul>
National	<p><i>Getting Back to Work</i> <i>Employment Programs for Ex-Offenders</i> Field Report Series Public/Private Ventures, Fall 2000 Maria L. Beck</p> <p><a href="http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/cf/54.pdf">http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/cf/54.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This thirty-four page booklet includes the following topics.</li> <li>Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous work with Ex-Offenders: The First 30 Years</li> <li>Attention Shifts to Employment: The 1990's</li> <li>Recent Research: A Focus on Content</li> </ol> </li> <li>An Overview of Current Activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal Initiatives</li> <li>State Initiatives</li> <li>Role of Criminal Justice Policy</li> </ol> </li> <li>Non-profit Ex-Offender Programs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Demographics of Participants</i></li> <li><i>Relationship with Criminal Justice System</i></li> <li><i>Working with Employers</i></li> <li><i>Role of the Strong Economy</i></li> <li><i>Recruitment and Outreach</i></li> <li><i>Transitional Employment</i></li> <li><i>Post placement Services</i></li> <li><i>Staffing</i></li> <li><i>Funding</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Challenges for Ex-Offender Practitioners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Continuity of Services</i></li> <li><i>Expanding Workforce Development Strategies</i></li> <li><i>Impact on Welfare Reform</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving Forward <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting More Effective Practices</li> <li>2. Combining Income and Skills Development</li> <li>3. Improving Continuity of Services</li> <li>4. Increasing Investment</li> <li>5. Expanding Research Efforts</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Appendix: Case Studies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Better People</i>, Portland, Oregon</li> <li>2. <i>Center for Employment Opportunities</i>, New York, New York</li> <li>3. <i>Safer Foundation</i>, Chicago, Illinois</li> <li>4. <i>South Forty Corporation</i>, New Your, New York</li> <li>5. <i>Virginia CARES</i>, Roanoke, Virginia</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
National	<p><i>NIJ-NIC-OCE Collaboration on Offender Job Training, Placement, and Retention</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/167575.txt">http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/167575.txt</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Institute for Justice, National Institute for Corrections and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Correctional Education work together on many occasions.</li> <li>• Program Focus highlights methods that are being used to help offenders in job training, placement, and retention.</li> <li>• NIC's Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement has training sessions for those who wish to help offenders find employment.</li> <li>• The NIC has given money to modify a software program that would greatly help offenders who are returning to the community.</li> <li>• OCE allows for grant competitions focusing on education and other offender re-entry issues.</li> <li>• There are more initiatives and projects that both organizations are working together on.</li> </ul>
National	<p>Inmate Placement Program Branch</p> <p><a href="http://www.unicor.gov/about/about_fpi_programs/inmate_transition/">http://www.unicor.gov/about/about_fpi_programs/inmate_transition/</a></p> <p>Employment Handbook  <a href="http://www.unicor.gov/about/about_fpi_programs/inmate_transition/pdf/employment_handbook.pdf">http://www.unicor.gov/about/about_fpi_programs/inmate_transition/pdf/employment_handbook.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with prisoners to compile "employment folders" which have their social security card, educational certificates, and resume all in one place.</li> <li>• Wants to establish employment resource centers in federal prisons for the use of the inmates</li> <li>• IPPB Mock Fair Handbook and video are available</li> </ul>
Florida	<p>Project ReConnect</p> <p>(Community networking initiative sponsored by the Florida Department of Corrections)</p> <p><a href="http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/compass/9906/page14.html">http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/compass/9906/page14.html</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project works to provide job placement services to ex-offenders (up to age 25) who upon the ending of their incarceration had completed either a GED, specter course, or vocational education programs.</li> <li>• Through speaking engagements, mock job fairs and career exploration seminars, for example, the company works to bring employers and community resource providers to the ex-offenders.</li> <li>• Employers receive the following benefits when they hire an ex-offender: Work Opportunity Tax Credit and access to the Federal Bonding Program.</li> </ul>
Georgia	<p>The Savannah Impact Program</p> <p><a href="http://www.savannahpd.org/cityweb/spd.nsf/0/bb79268b8477e80285256af60064cfba?OpenDocument">http://www.savannahpd.org/cityweb/spd.nsf/0/bb79268b8477e80285256af60064cfba?OpenDocument</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program works to keep communities safe from high-risk offenders who are on parole/probation by working with community corrections program through both state and local agencies.</li> <li>• Through intense supervision, substance abuse counseling, and support programs they wish to reduce recidivism.</li> <li>• The program encourages the ex-offenders to change the "anti-achievement culture and learning deficits" so that they can succeed in the future.</li> </ul>

Illinois	<p><i>Public Safety and Re-Entry Subcommittee Hearing minutes</i>  <a href="http://163.191.134.23/reentry/docs/reentry_r-ps-hearingES-042805.pdf">http://163.191.134.23/reentry/docs/reentry_r-ps-hearingES-042805.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While more transitional centers are needed, luckily, a skills center is being opened.</li> <li>• A Day Reporting Center has opened to help ex-offenders to get jobs and recover after drug abuse.</li> <li>• A community member suggested tax credits for employees who hire ex-offenders. It was also requested that Ceasefire receive more funding so it can expand.</li> <li>• The Expunge Program and a Tax Break program are already available, however, they might not be well-known. Instead of expanding these programs or getting other incentives for employees work should be done to publicize the already existing programs.</li> </ul>
Illinois	<p><i>Chicago's Safer Foundation: A Road Back for Ex-Offenders</i>  Program Focus  <a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/167575.txt">http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/167575.txt</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1972, the Safer foundation runs a program called Crossroads Community Correctional Center for the Illinois Department of Corrections.</li> <li>• It also manages a private school in the Cook County Jail called PACE (Programmed Activities for Correctional Education) Institute.</li> <li>• In order to educate ex-offenders it uses a small-group, peer-based approach. There are lifeguards, or case managers, which help the ex-offenders for a year after they finally do get secure employment.</li> <li>• This mentions that they have expanded their service area through fundraising and more importantly through satellite offices.</li> <li>• Safer uses many effective strategies. They asked the state to include a higher performance goal – a specialist will get no reimbursement if the client quits a job within 30 days of getting it. Alternatively, the specialists can receive bonuses based on the number of jobs they find for offenders.</li> <li>• Some keys to success are talented staff, volunteers, working with the Illinois Department of Corrections, thinking the client comes first, talking to politicians, serving many people at once, using pilot demonstrations and trials before starting a program, giving the client responsibility, and always looking for ways to improve.</li> </ul>
Kansas	<p>Department of Corrections Offender Employment Programs  Kansas Legislative Research Department,  2005 Economic Development, 8-16  <a href="http://www.skyways.org/ksleg/KLRD/2005CommRpts/ecodevo.pdf">http://www.skyways.org/ksleg/KLRD/2005CommRpts/ecodevo.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In FY 2005 the department provided employment for around 1,100 inmates.</li> <li>• About 250 vocational education program slots are provided for the ex-offenders.</li> </ul>
Louisiana	<p><i>Solutions to Poverty Summit:</i>  Reducing Neighborhood Crime Through Positive Interventions  PowerPoint presentation on Safer Foundation  December 7, 2004  <a href="http://www.dss.state.la.us/Documents/OFS/Solutions_to_Poverty_Documents/Solutions%20to%20Poverty%20Summit12704%20rp.pdf">http://www.dss.state.la.us/Documents/OFS/Solutions_to_Poverty_Documents/Solutions%20to%20Poverty%20Summit12704%20rp.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission and history of Safer</li> <li>• Safer's Direct Services include employment, education, supportive services, and residential services.</li> <li>• Demonstration Initiatives include the Sheridan, Ready4Work, Halfway Back (under design), and Housing (under design).</li> <li>• Employer Relationship Building includes the following policies: strengthen the current employer relationships, build new employer relationships, learn from employers, and acknowledge employers.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer is a Local Advocate and Policy Thought Leader.</li> <li>• New Policies to Promote Ex-Offender Employment in Illinois include the following: Public Act 93-0210-Criminal Identification-Expungement, Public Act 93-0211-Sealing of Misdemeanor Conviction Records, Public Act 93-0207-Certificates of Relief From Disabilities and Good Conduct, and Public Act 93-0208-Transitional Jobs for Ex-Offenders. Within the city of Chicago there is a program called "Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Transitional Jobs Program Servicing Ex-Offenders." Cook County actually has its own "Cook County Re-Entry Project."</li> </ul>
Maryland	Offender Employment Program  <a href="http://www.mcctc.com/oep.htm">http://www.mcctc.com/oep.htm</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program works to ease the transition for ex-offenders that are returning to the community. It offers a variety of services to help people obtain jobs including: access to resources, job preparedness, help finding and obtaining a job, and post-employment follow-up. They also offer employers incentives to hire ex-offenders.</li> </ul>
Maryland	<i>Offender Re-Entry and Employment: Evaluation of the Yes NetWORK</i> (Presentation to the Job Opportunities Task Force, August 29, 2002)  Meredith H. Thanner, M.A. Bureau of Governmental Research University of Maryland, College Park  <a href="http://www.bgr.umd.edu/docs/jotfpres.ppt">http://www.bgr.umd.edu/docs/jotfpres.ppt</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The YES NetWORK is a blend between the private sector and government agencies that focuses on Baltimore ex-offenders (no child sex offenders). Since there aren't enough laborers available in Maryland, ex-offenders could find work if they had the appropriate skills and preparation. Two of the NetWORK Components are the following: PACE (Personal Assessment and Career Exploration) and Business Mentoring.</li> <li>• The NetWORK is being evaluated by the Bureau of Governmental Research, and the findings to date are included.</li> </ul>
Maryland	<i>Time to Work: Managing the Employment of Sex Offenders Under Community Supervision</i> Center for Sex Offender Management, A Project of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice <a href="http://www.csom.org/pubs/timetowork.pdf">http://www.csom.org/pubs/timetowork.pdf</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important topics in the paper include the following: effectively watching over sex offenders' job activities, building relationships with employers, putting people in the correct job positions, how to better approach searching for jobs and also how to determine which jobs are the best for each person.</li> </ul>
Michigan	Motivation & Strength-Based Approaches that Improve Offender Management  PowerPoint Presentation by Michael D. Clark, MSW, LMSW, Center for Strength-Based Strategies  <a href="http://www.buildmotivation.com">www.buildmotivation.com</a>  The powerpoint link: <a href="http://www.csom.org/pubs/timetowork.pdf">http://www.csom.org/pubs/timetowork.pdf</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discusses how motivational approaches to change help increase the chance of change</li> <li>• The four biggest factors that make treatment work are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Model and technique 15%</li> <li>○ Client factors 40%</li> <li>○ Relationship 30%</li> <li>○ Hope and expectancy 15%</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lists possible strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Skills, talents, personal virtues and traits, interpersonal skills, interpersonal and environmental resources, cultural knowledge and lore, family stories and narratives, knowledge gained from struggling against adversity, knowledge from one's occupational or parental roles, spirituality and faith, and hopes and dreams.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There are seven principle practices that help build a good relationship between community treatment centers and courts. They are to: respect ex-offenders as people, cooperate with the clients but not necessarily their behavior, recognize that sometimes you need to stop their choices for their</li> </ul>

		own health, watch for “signs of sobriety” or improvement, keep an open mind (not trying to be the expert on their situations) to increase cooperation, learn what the ex-offender wants to accomplish, and finally work on small steps of change.
Missouri	<p><i>Kansas City Community Release Center (KCCRC)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/KC%20Region.pdf">http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/KC%20Region.pdf</a></p> <p>Articles such as these can be found at:  <a href="http://www.doc.mo.gov/Horizon/horizonmain.htm">http://www.doc.mo.gov/Horizon/horizonmain.htm</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the program involves giving housing and processing parole for the ex-offenders.</li> <li>• The program starts with a two-week orientation with a referral to treatment, if required. Clients living at the center must have full-time employment.</li> <li>• KCCRC works with Connections for Success to provide an intense two-week workshop on employment.</li> <li>• They participated in the Kansas City-area Offender Job Fair.</li> <li>• With help from the Department of Economic Development’s Division of Workforce Development, KCCRC held a weekly required job readiness class.</li> </ul>
Missouri	<p>Keynote speech for the <i>Association of Paroling Authorities International Annual Conference</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.apaintl.org/Pub-Conf2003-KeynoteAddress.html">http://www.apaintl.org/Pub-Conf2003-KeynoteAddress.html</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker critiques current parole policies, analyzing in turn the decision to release, the decision to supervise, and the decision to revoke parole.</li> </ul>
Missouri	<p>Executive Summary of <i>Employment Connection</i></p> <p>For information about the <i>Employment Connection</i>  <a href="http://www.employmentstl.org/">http://www.employmentstl.org/</a></p> <p>Resource Guide for the St. Louis Region:  <a href="http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/STL%20Region.pdf">http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/STL%20Region.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This twenty-page summary elaborates what Employment Connection does. It helps to provide services for SLATE (St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment) and is committed to helping 150 WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Adults get full-time employment. The summary also details the organization’s 28-year history of meeting its obligations to SLATE. This thorough executive summary addresses topics such as networking with other businesses (page 14) and working with community services organizations (page 17).</li> </ul>
Missouri	<p>Resource Guide for the St. Louis Region:  <a href="http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/STL%20Region.pdf">http://www.doc.mo.gov/pdf/STL%20Region.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This resource guides ex-offenders to find services and organizations that can help them find work, housing, food, and other essential services.</li> </ul>
Missouri	<p><i>Missouri Department of Corrections Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative (SVORI)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.doc.missouri.gov/reentry/MRPSVORI.htm">http://www.doc.missouri.gov/reentry/MRPSVORI.htm</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The three-phase reentry program is called Project Reconnect. The first phase takes place 12 months before release, and during this time the Specialists work with the offender and institution and a Transition Accountability Plan is made. In phase two of the project, which can last up to a year after reentry, the Transition Team helps the offender with coping and finding a job. In phase three, the sustaining phase begins as the offender graduates from the project. Even after graduation program resources continue to be available.</li> </ul>
New Jersey	<p><i>Offender Employment Report</i>  Civic Research Institute</p> <p><a href="http://www.civicresearchinstitute.com">www.civicresearchinstitute.com</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The newsletter for the Offender Employment Report is available six times a year. The program works to develop new programs, management techniques, and methods to help offenders get and keep jobs.</li> </ul>
New Jersey	<p>Employment Opportunities for Ex-Offenders in New Jersey</p> <p>NJISJ (New Jersey Institute for Social Justice)</p> <p><a href="http://www.njisj.org/reports/heldrich_report.html">http://www.njisj.org/reports/heldrich_report.html</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This analysis summarizes the labor market conditions that ex-offenders face and recommends what future research could be done to better understand the situation. For example, to use the information already there to measure and continually analyze the patterns of employment and wages for ex-offenders.</li> <li>• It also gives charts on NJ Employment Prospects for ex-offenders and takes note of the many</li> </ul>



		<p>barriers to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It states that the most effective way to secure a job for a client is to go and talk directly with the employers.</li> <li>• NJISJ offers a program which trains staff of organizations that are also providing services to ex-offenders to better find jobs or develop careers for the ex-offenders.</li> </ul>
New York	<p><i>Employment-Focused Programs for Ex-Prisoners, What we have learned, what are we learning, and where should we go from here?</i></p> <p>May 24, 2006 MDRC <a href="http://www.mdrc.org/publications/435/overview.html">http://www.mdrc.org/publications/435/overview.html</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This paper is background for the meeting “Research on Prisoner Reentry: What Do We Know and What Do We Want to Know?” sponsored by the National Poverty Center, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan.</li> <li>• Contents include: the “rationale for employment-focused reentry programs,” “the quantity and quality of previous research,” “the results of post-release (community-based) programs,” “prison based-programs,” and “programs that combine prerelease and postrelease services,” “current studies being done,” and finally a section called “Filling the Gaps: What Other Approaches Should Be Tested?” This last title includes: “earnings supplements,” “employer-focused strategies,” “education and training strategies,” “system reforms,” and a section called “beyond work.”</li> </ul>
New York City	<p><i>Successful Job Placement for Ex-Offenders: The Center for Employment Opportunities</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/168102.txt">http://www.ncjrs.gov/txtfiles/168102.txt</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO forms work crews of ex-offenders as a short-term solution for a job with the overall goal of finding them a permanent job.</li> <li>• Clients spend four days a week with the work crew and one day with an employment specialist or interviewing for other more permanent jobs.</li> <li>• These types of crews help workers develop values that are sought out by employers.</li> <li>• CEO also helps the ex-offenders by acting as a human resource department for employers. They do this by interviewing participants, and helping the ex-offenders or other employees with substance abuse or any other problems that affect their work.</li> <li>• Through the Federal Job Training Partnership Act, the program pays employers for half of employee wages for a full 8 weeks at the very least if criteria are met. The program also works to help employers receive tax credits.</li> <li>• In order to stay productive, the employment specialists work towards quotas and in the end about 70% of ex-offenders find full-time work in 2-3 months.</li> </ul>
Oregon	<p><i>Better People, Not Just Better Workers</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.betterpeople.org/">http://www.betterpeople.org/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program works to reduce recidivism through a number of different stages. It starts with an orientation giving information to the clients so they can make informed decisions. Then cognitive behavioral therapy classes using Moral Reconciliation Therapy are used to encourage attitude change. Clients are given a referral for a temporary job. After completing Step One of the MRT process, they take Job Readiness classes from another ex-offender to inspire confidence that they too can succeed. After reaching Step Three of the MRT process, they are helped to get a permanent job that pays at least \$9.00 an hour with health benefits. While there are no guarantees, usually there is a high rate of success. Once they have the job, retention services help</li> </ul>



		<p>the client to keep the job, and even after they leave that job they can continue with assistance finding jobs if they are a member of the Alumni Club who pays dues.</p>
South Carolina	<p>Offender Employment Preparation Program 2003-2004 Annual Report, December 15, 2004</p> <p><a href="http://www.scstatehouse.net/reports/OffenderEmpprepProg2004AnnualReport.doc">http://www.scstatehouse.net/reports/OffenderEmpprepProg2004AnnualReport.doc</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Offender Employment Preparation Program Act that was passed in 2001 receives no funding. The South Carolina Interagency Reentry Collaborative Team has come together and comprises 10 relevant departments in the state and the Alston Wilkes Society.</li> <li>• The Short Term Offender Program (STOP) began in 2004 to address the special needs of only short-term offenders.</li> <li>• The Division of Industries works with inmates so they can return to the community with training and job skills. There are work release and pre-release centers at twelve Level I (minimum-security) institutions to further help ex-offenders reintegrate successfully into society.</li> <li>• Vocational Training is offered through the Palmetto Unified School District in SCDC.</li> <li>• Ongoing programs include the following: Self-Paced In-Class Educational Program, Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), and the North Columbia Reentry Partnership Initiative.</li> </ul>
Washington State	<p><i>Program focus (National Institute of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, Office of Correctional Education):</i> Washington State's Corrections Clearinghouse: A Comprehensive Approach to Offender Employment</p> <p><a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/174441.pdf">http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/174441.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corrections Clearinghouse (CCH) was founded in the 1970s. It has both juvenile and adult institutions which include the women's apprenticeship program and the community service work crews. They also offer pre-release and post-release job search assistance.</li> <li>• There is a Vocational Opportunity Training and Education (VOTE) program through a college in Tacoma that is specifically for ex-offenders who are recovering from some sort of chemical dependency.</li> <li>• CCH has compiled a Case Management Resource Directory which clients can use to find things they need – from clothing to help overcoming substance abuse.</li> <li>• Within the pamphlet there are notes on replicating this CCH model as well as summarized findings on the connection between decreased recidivism and different educational programs.</li> </ul>
Washington State	<p>List of Offender Employment Services</p> <p><a href="http://www.wa.gov/esd/oes/services/default.htm">http://www.wa.gov/esd/oes/services/default.htm</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a list of different offender employment services. They include: employment reentry classes, training in how to fight offender barriers, WorkSource offices, Washington State Bonding Program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, an offender reentry guide and more.</li> </ul>
Washington, DC	<p>Smart Solutions: Individuals With Criminal Histories: A Potential Untapped Resource</p> <p><i>The Welfare to Work Partnership</i> <i>Legal Action Center</i> <i>Urban Institute Justice Policy Center</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.hirenetwork.org/pdfs/SS_Ex-offenders1.pdf">http://www.hirenetwork.org/pdfs/SS_Ex-offenders1.pdf</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The publication lists advantages to hiring an ex-offender which include: financial incentives (tax credits, etc), support from Service Providers and Supervision Agencies, and the benefit of trained and motivated workers.</li> <li>• It also includes information regarding businesses which hire ex-offenders, the laws pertaining to hiring ex-offenders, and ex-offender and employer liability.</li> <li>• In terms of recruiting qualified ex-offenders, how certain employment agencies and welfare-to-work services screen people is addressed. The National Institute of Corrections Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement (OCJTP) assists in getting offenders training, job placement and job retention. The program also</li> </ul>

		gives suggestions to businesses to help them ensure that their hiring policies are not discriminatory.
Canada Article	Community employment centres for offenders: A preliminary exploration Correctional Service of Canada – Forum on Corrections Research <a href="http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/Vol17No1/v17n1g_e.shtml">http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/Vol17No1/v17n1g_e.shtml</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study featured in the article was done to make a profile of offenders who typically use employment centers after they were developed in 2001/2002.</li> <li>• It keeps track of the services that are most needed by offenders, as identified by them.</li> <li>• The study gathered information on the jobs where ex-offenders were hired, including pay and the level of satisfaction with that pay. It also tried to discover what factors affected employment outcomes.</li> <li>• The authors found a strong positive relationship between the offender's ratings of social support for employment with the outcome of getting a job and keeping it. Offenders build confidence in themselves after using programs such as this centre.</li> </ul>
Canada	<i>Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada</i> <a href="http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/research_e.shtml">http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/research_e.shtml</a>  Organizations homepage: <a href="http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/">http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This branch produces a number of publications on correctional topics. Titles include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The impact of community-based employment on offender reintegration</li> <li>○ Offender employment: A research summary</li> <li>○ Offender employment: What research tells us</li> <li>○ Women offenders' employment needs: Research for a gender-informed employment strategy</li> <li>○ Community employment centers for offenders: A preliminary exploration</li> <li>○ Offender employment and employability: An overview</li> <li>○ Building bridges to hope: A pre-employment program for women with criminal justice involvement</li> <li>○ The importance of employment to offender re-integration</li> <li>○ The National Employability Skills Program for offenders: A preliminary investigation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Manitoba, Canada	<i>Offender Employment Program, Manitoba Metis Federation</i>  <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/bird/PreEmploy/offenderemploymentpr195.html">http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/bird/PreEmploy/offenderemploymentpr195.html</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program is used to address problems to employment for aboriginal inmates in Canadian prisons.</li> <li>• The federation seeks to get long-term employment for the released inmates. To do this they offer cultural supports, intake and release planning, different referrals, monitoring of their progress, employment assistance, education on how to write a resume, job training, wage support, educational programs, and single seat sponsorship.</li> </ul>
Periodical	<u>Monthly Labor Review</u> , April 1985 <i>Communications</i>  <a href="http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1985/04/rpt1full.pdf">http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1985/04/rpt1full.pdf</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article entitled "Programs to Aid Ex-offenders: We Don't Know 'Nothing Works'"</li> <li>• According to the article, the offender employment programs are not being evaluated thoroughly enough. Luckily, there is current literature that can provide a model for developing rehabilitating programs that are successful. The literature also says that interventions and programs must take into account the differences between offenders and must be strong to be effective.</li> </ul>

Periodical	<p><u>Welfare Information Network</u>  <u>Issue Notes</u>, Vol. 7, No. 4, March 2003</p> <p><a href="http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/helpingparents-with-criminal-records-IN.htm">http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/helpingparents-with-criminal-records-IN.htm</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article “Helping Parents with Criminal Records Find Employment and Achieve Self-Sufficiency”</li> <li>• The article describes new practices which include the following:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), New York</li> <li>2. Project Rio (Re-Integration of Offenders), Texas</li> <li>3. Virginia Community Action Re-Entry System (CARES)</li> <li>4. Pioneer Human Services (PHS), Seattle, Washington</li> <li>5. National H.I.R.E. Network</li> <li>6. Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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### **About the Center for Community Corrections**

The Center for Community Corrections is a broad coalition of former public officials, researchers and correctional professionals representing local, state, and federal concerns. The Center was created in 1987 to promote the overall concept of community-based sanctions as well as specific program options.

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